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MR. F I S K E ' s

S E R M O N.



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WASHINGTON

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

S E R M O N,

DELIVERED AUGUST 15, 1798,

AT THE

O R D I N A T I O N

OF THE

REV. JACOB ABBOT,

TO THE PASTORAL OFFICE OVER THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN
HAMPTON-FALLS.

BY ABEL FISCHE, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN WILTON.

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THE LONDON MUSEUM

OF THE HISTORY OF MAN

AND THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

IN THE EAST AND WEST INDIES AND AFRICA



BY THE DIRECTOR

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A Sermon.

I PETER, IV. 11.

IF ANY MAN SPEAK, LET HIM SPEAK AS THE ORACLES OF GOD.

THAT great benevolent Being, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things, hath in a wonderful and discriminating manner exhibited his goodness to the human race. While the angels, who kept not their first estate, are reserved in chains, under darkness, to the judgment of the great day, we may receive it, as a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that God hath not sent his Son into the world, to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. It hath not only pleased God, who is an absolute Sovereign, and who is good, and doeth good, to collect from the ruins of human apostasy a church unto himself, which shall be to the praise of his grace, while immortality endures; but he hath made many glorious and interesting promises respecting it, and conferred upon it many signal privileges and blessings.

Among

Among the numerous expressions of his goodness, and of his provident care for the instruction, and moral improvement of men, we notice the institution of the christian ministry. That promise, *I will give you pastors according to mine own heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding*, is a promise, which breathes a spirit of good will to men. Pastors and teachers are among those gifts, which Christ when he led captivity captive, received and gave to men, *for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*. And those, whose minds are impressed with a due sense of the importance of divine and spiritual things, will be ready to express the grateful and devout feelings of their hearts in language like the following :—*How beautiful are the feet of them, that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!* The sphere in which ministers of religion move, is honorable, and important. Their work is a good work. They are not left to make a random steerage through life, nor to propagate schemes and sentiments of their own. They act as ambassadors. They prove their instructions communicated to them ; and they are to preach not themselves, *but Christ Jesus the Lord*. The words of the text are peculiarly applicable to them. *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God*.

In the following discourse, some notice will be taken of the superior excellence of *the oracles of God* above all other writings ; of the duty of ministers in their preaching to adhere to the principles and instructions of divine revelation ; of the motives, which should influence them to fidelity, and of the unreasonableness of finding fault with preachers, *when they speak as the oracles of God*.

Let us notice the superior excellence of the oracles of God above all other writings.

By oracles of God, we may understand that system of truths, of doctrines and moral instructions contained in the scriptures of the old and new Testament. What writings or compositions give such rational, sublime and exalted views of the perfections and attributes of Deity, and of the nature, extent and importance of moral virtue ? They show to man what is good. They direct him in his most important interests

terests and concerns. They are a complete rule of faith and practice. They respect not only a man's external deportment, but the heart. They inculcate the purest views, and sincerity untainted with the least mixture of hypocrisy. The motives also, by which they enforce the practice of these things, which are *true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report*, are great and glorious.

In allusion to the light and privileges of divine revelation Moses enquires, with transports of admiration and joy; *What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgment so righteous, as all this law which I set before you this day?* And says St. Paul to Timothy, *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

It is most certain, that, if mankind were united in a belief of the doctrines, which are pointed out in the sacred oracles, and were influenced by the rules and maxims of moral conduct there prescribed, social order and happiness would be greatly promoted. God would be worshipped *in spirit and in truth*. Men would live like a band of brothers, and their union, harmony and love would be like the *due of Hermon, and as the due that descended upon the mountains of Zion*. Those hostile passions, which agitate the world with contentions and animosity, with bloodshed and desolation, would be suppressed. The hearts of men would universally glow with piety, generosity and kindness. *The wolf and the lamb would lie down together*; and there would be nothing to hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain. Rulers would be *just men ruling, in the fear of God*. Subjects would *lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty*. Parents and children, masters and servants, and persons in all the various connexions of life, would perform the duties incumbent on them with mutual readiness and delight. In short, their feet would be guided in the way of peace here, and a blissful immortality would await them, when called to quit their present, and enter upon a new mode of existence.

This

This leads me to remark, that there is among other things, this superior excellence in the oracles of God above all other writings, they bring into view the mediatorial kingdom of Jesus Christ. They afford light and comfort, where other writings can only deal in uncertain conjecture. The oracles of God illuminate the dark valley of the shadow of death. They exhibit life and immortality to view, and give the fullest assurance to such as believe the report of the gospel, and submit to its great practical design, that, *though their earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, they shall inhabit a building of God, an house not made with hands, and receive a crown of life and glory, which fadeth not away.*

It seems that, if men would, with seriousness, candor and impartiality, examine the internal and external evidence of the truth and authenticity of the holy scriptures, the numerous considerations, that might be produced to evince their divine original, the nature of the doctrines taught, the excellence of the instructions given, the miracles wrought in testimony of the truth of the divine mission of those, who were employed as messengers, or publishers of the system, and the fulfilment of the numerous predictions interspersed here and there through the sacred volume, they, instead of being ashamed of the gospel of Christ, would pronounce those happy ; happy in respect to time and happy in respect to eternity, who are *built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone.*

But however true, important and interesting revealed religion is ; yet its progress and influence have been obstructed by a spirit of infidelity. Men have come forward with their objections, and taken the field with all the aid, which wit and satire could afford. But their objections have been so satisfactorily answered, and the mists, which their satirical talents had raised to conceal the truth, so thoroughly dissipated, that the faith of many, instead of being shaken, hath collected new strength.

Bishop WATSON, in a late reply to one of the opposers of revealed religion, says, " What I blame you for, is this, that you have attempted to lessen the authority of the bible by ridicule more than by reason ; that you have brought forward every petty objection, which your ingenuity could discover,

cover, or your industry pick up from the writings of others; and without taking any notice of the answers, which have been repeatedly given to these objections, you urge and enforce them, as if they were new. There is some novelty, at least in your manner, for you go beyond all others in boldness of assertion and in profaneness of argumentation."

The author, on whose publication the Bishop makes his strictures, remarks, "Should the bible & testament hereafter fall, it is not I that have been the occasion." To which he replies, "You look, I think, upon your production with a parent's partial eye, when you speak of it in such a style of self-complacency. The bible, Sir, has withstood the learning of *Porphyry*, and the power of *Julian*, to say nothing of the manichean *Faustus*—it has resisted the genius of *Bolingbroke*, and the wit of *Voltaire*, to say nothing of a numerous herd of inferior assailants, and it will not fall by your force. You have barbed anew the blunted arrows of former adversaries; you have feathered them with blasphemy and ridicule; dipped them in your deadliest poison; aimed them with your utmost skill; shot them against the shield of faith with your utmost vigour; but, like the feeble javelin of aged *Priam*, they will scarcely reach the mark, will fall to the ground without a stroke."

We pass on to notice the duty of ministers, in their preaching, to adhere to the principles and instructions of divine revelation.

If ministers were to preach for doctrines the commandments of men, or were they to advance a system of faith and practice, which does not comport with the oracles of God, they would pervert the end and design of their office. They are not sent forth to preach or propagate a new religion, but to explain and enforce the religion, which is contained in the word of God. If the religion, which the ministers of Christ preach, appear new to others, it is not a novelty, which they have invented.

When the prophets of old were sent forth to proclaim important messages to men, they spake, *as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, and their errand was commonly sanctioned with words to this effect; *thus saith the Lord*. When they were sent forth as prophets, or teachers of men, it was the will or

message of God which they were to proclaim. *The Prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream ; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully : what is the chaff to the wheat ? saith the Lord.* The following are the words addressed to Ezekiel, *Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel : therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. And thou shalt speak my words, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.* When Christ sent forth his Apostles to preach the gospel among all nations, he directed them what to do, and among other things, said, *Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you.* He had instructed them in the nature and design of his kingdom, and these instructions were to be the invariable rule of their preaching. And they were viewed by those, who received their message, as servants of the most high God, who shewed to men the way of salvation. Hence Paul and Sylvanus and Timotheus, in an epistle to the Thessalonians, say, *For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye receive the word of God, which ye heard of us ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is, in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.* It was the business of the Apostles, who were sent forth to propagate the christian system, to declare such things as they had heard, as they had seen with their eyes, had looked upon, and their hands had handled of the word of life. So fully persuaded were they of their fidelity, in pursuing the instructions, which were given them, that Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians does not hesitate to say, *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that, which we have preached unto you, let him be accused.*

And if it were the duty of the prophets of old, and of the Apostles of Christ to conform, in their messages to men, to the divine instructions, which they had received, we may with equal reason conclude that, it is the duty of ministers, at the present day, to adhere, in their preaching, to the principles and instructions of divine revelation. And unless this be the case with them, we do not hesitate to say, that they cannot be considered as good ministers of Christ and faithful stewards of the mysteries of God.

If this be true, perhaps, it may be thought, by some, that the task of ministers is light and easy. But to be able to understand the meaning and import of particular places in scripture, to illustrate the connexion, harmony and consistency of its several parts; to defend the gospel against the attacks of infidels, and to convince, or stop the mouths of gainfayers; to know how to apply the rules and directions of scripture, to the state of society, or of particular individuals; rightly to divide the word of truth, so as to give every man his *portion in due season*; or to be as a *scribe well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*, who can with ease and pertinency, *bring out of his treasure things new and old*, a minister must give himself to reading, meditation and prayer. These things will require diligent application, and laborious researches after the truth.

It will be an object with ministers to inspire their hearers with rational, consistent and adoring views of the being, perfections and government of God, of the character of Jesus Christ, and of the offices of the Holy Spirit; to give a just statement of the doctrines of free grace, and of the necessity and importance of holiness, of man's weakness and insufficiency, and of tendered aid and assistance; to solve the doubting, to cheer the sorrowful, and to animate the believer in the ways of well doing. In short, they will endeavour to make such a just statement of the reasonableness and importance of religion, and of the rewards annexed to a virtuous and obedient life, a life consecrated to the service of Deity; and the nature and consequence of sin and impenitency, as shall move their hearers, who duly regard things in their connexion and real importance, to avoid *that which is evil, and to cleave to that, which is good*; that so they may be profitable to the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers, and be instrumental of their progression in knowledge and spiritual perfection.

We proceed to suggest some motives, which should influence them to fidelity.

The favour and continued regard of the people, among whom they labour in word and doctrine, should be a motive with ministers to be faithful, when people have reason to view ministers as unfaithful, or as withholding the necessary word

word of admonition and reproof, through fear of giving offence, will they not be apt to despise such ministers, and treat them with contempt? On the contrary, are ministers prudent and faithful, desirous to promote the instruction and moral improvement of their hearers, to promote the good order and real happiness of the people, among whom they reside, as public teachers of religion, will not they be generally respected, though duty may sometimes call them to exhibit truth in such a point of light, as to excite a sudden, temporary irritation.

Another motive to fidelity, in the ministerial office, is the hope, or prospect of being useful to the souls of men, being instrumental of advancing the cause of religion, and of building up the Redeemer's kingdom in the world. Though ministers may have reason to complain, that their labours are too unsuccessful, yet they are often instrumental of doing good. And if they can entertain the hope, that they shall be the means of diffusing useful knowledge, of *stirring up the pure mind by way of remembrance*, of checking the progress of vice, and of prevailing with any to pay a serious attention to the great salvation, which the gospel proposes, they should be animated to faithful exertions. If ministers see and feel the importance of religion, it must give them peculiar joy and satisfaction, to find that those committed to their care regard *the things which belong to their peace, and walk in the truth*.

It may also be suggested, that if ministers be faithful, they have reason to hope that Christ will be with them, and that his grace will be sufficient for them. This thought should encourage and quicken them amidst all their trials and difficulties, amidst all their labours and services.

We add, that a consideration of the approbation and reward, which faithful ministers will receive from their divine Lord and Master, should move those, who enter upon the office, to be faithful in the discharge of the duties of it. And if they may but finish their *Course with joy*, and *when the Chief Shepherd shall appear receive a crown of glory, which fadeth not away*, they should not count even their lives dear to themselves; they should be willing to spend and be spent in the service of souls and the Redeemer. And such will be
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the lot of the faithful ministers of Christ, whether they be successful or not.

Gloomy will be the case, and aggravated the condemnation of ministers, if after they have preached to others, if after all the means and advantages of knowledge and happiness, they have enjoyed, they themselves should be cast away. But it is to be hoped, that love to God, to the Redeemer, and to the souls of men will stimulate the sacerdotal order to take heed to the ministry, which they have received in the Lord, that they fulfil it, and that in so doing, they may save both, themselves and those who hear them.

Let us now just hint at the unreasonableness and danger of finding fault with preachers, when they *speaking as the oracles of God*.

Ministers do not claim dominion over the faith of men, but they wish to be helpers of their joy. It is their aim to exhibit truth, and they appeal to the judgment and understanding of those, whom they address, as to the propriety and importance of what they say. They often meet with those, who in some respects differ from them in opinion; but who are possessed of noble, generous and candid minds. No fearful apprehensions are to be entertained respecting men of this description. But they are sometimes called to deal with unreasonable men, men of corrupt minds, men who love darkness rather than light, and who are unwilling to have the truth exhibited. But shall ministers be considered as enemies, because they tell you the truth, and truth, which is of a serious, interesting and infinitely important nature? Do they any thing more than duty calls them to do? And if they speak as the oracles of God, is it not unreasonable to blame, to fault them.

Motives or designs are often unjustly imputed to ministers. They conceive it to be their duty to hold up vice to view in its odious nature, and dreadful tendency. And it is not unusual for offences to be noticed, of which some of their hearers may have been guilty, and perhaps recently. Such individuals consider themselves as particularly pointed at, and others think the same, whereas the ministers themselves had not the most distant idea of the applicability of the remarks to those, who made the particular application. And should they,

they, in consequence of such things, meet with any kind of abuse, or disrespect, would it not be without any just foundation? To find fault, when they speak as the oracles of God, betrays an ignorant head or a perverse heart. It is dangerous as well as unreasonable. It is in effect to find fault with the system of God's moral government; and if men be not reconciled to God's moral government, if they disregard his messages, and *set at nought all his counsel and reproof, they shall eat of the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices.* They may, when, perhaps, it is forever too late, be ready to lament, and say, *How have we hated instruction and our hearts despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of our teachers, nor inclined our ear to them, who instructed us.*

IMPROVEMENT.

IF the preceding observations have truth and propriety for their basis, then we may infer, that those, who wish to lessen the credit, and destroy the influence of revealed religion, may be ranked among the most dangerous enemies of mankind. They oppose a system which is truly benevolent, which is friendly to the rights of man; friendly to the order, peace and happiness of society; friendly to rulers; friendly to subjects; friendly to the rich; friendly to the poor; friendly in respect to time; and friendly in respect to eternity. How much then is it to be lamented, that any should represent the christian system only as a cunningly devised fable, and employ their wit and talents to bring the scriptures of the old and new testament into contempt. And can it be wondered, that those, who are set for the defence of the gospel, and to keep up in the world a knowledge of and belief in the doctrines and duties of revealed religion, should display great zeal and peculiar concern, at this day of darkness and spreading infidelity?

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Who will be so uncandid as to impute our zeal and concern to an anxiety about a temporal support? Though some of us, who have borne the burden and heat of the day, who find ourselves greatly enervated by a studious, sedentary life, might by being driven from our office and employment, be left in a pitiful condition; yet others of us could mingle with our fellow citizens, in the common pursuits and occupations of life, and stand an equal chance with them to gain a comfortable subsistence. But, alas! what would be the state of society, if certain renovating, demoralizing principles which are exhibited on the theatre of the east, should spread among us? What means to acquire property, or what security in the possession? And who would there be to defend the honor and chastity of our wives, and of our daughters. Perhaps the husband, the father might be the helpless spectator of the infamy and ruin of his wife, of his daughter. And how would our beloved offspring be educated? Instead of seeing our sons, *as plants grown up in their youth, and our daughters, as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace* we might expect to see them stimulated by precept and example in all the pursuits of violence, rapine, debauchery and blasphemy.

Though we do not profess to discard the propriety of this idea, that those, who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel; yet our zeal and concern, at the present day, do not originate from an anxiety about a temporal support. We tremble for the ark of God, for the cause of religion. Our zeal and concern have the glory of God, the peace and prosperity of society, and the present and future happiness of our fellow men for their object. And may we be improved, as the instruments of carrying the benevolent designs of revealed religion into effect, so that we may see those, with whom we are concerned, walking in the truth, walking in wisdom's ways, walking in that narrow path, which leadeth to life everlasting.

On this occasion, my Fathers and Brethren in the ministry will permit a word of congratulation and exhortation.

Amidst all the revolutions and anarchy of the present eventful day, we behold with pleasure, that the altars of God, which have been erected in our land, instead of being demolished,

lished, stand respected, and that on days consecrated for social worship, instead of seeing our temples deserted, and the walls left bare, they are more or less in all our towns, whose breasts glow with piety, and delight, when it is said *Let us go into the house of the Lord.* These things should not only excite our gratitude, but quicken us in our endeavours to promote the instruction and moral improvement of those, who favour us with their presence and attention:

May we ever speak as the oracles of God; and instead of having the mortification to see our people desert our ministry, and wander forth in the paths of error and delusion, may we have the happiness to see, that they obey from the heart, that form of doctrine, which is taught by the spirit of inspiration. Thus may we and they be united in the duties and services assigned us here, and be forever happy together hereafter in mansions of prepared glory and blessedness.

My respected young friend, who is this day to be separated unto the work of the gospel ministry, whereunto he is called, claims my attention:

DEAR SIR,

That you have been privileged with a birth and education in a land of Gospel light, that from a child you have known the holy scriptures, that you have descended from parents, whose great aim has been to instil into the minds of their offspring an early sense of the importance of religion, and who have had both an inclination and ability to favour you with many literary advantages, are considerations, which justly demand your grateful acknowledgments, and since you are disposed, at this day of prevailing dissipation and infidelity, to devote yourself to the service of God, in the gospel of his Son, may it not be viewed as an unequivocal proof of this pleasing hope, that you *choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season?* No wonder if this should be the case, if you have a due respect unto the recompense of reward.

The work, to which you are this day to be separated, is arduous and pleasing, laborious and useful, solemn and joyful. In order that you may not wound the feelings of your friends and acquaintance, disappoint the hopes and expectations of the christian

christian society in this place, and fail of the divine approbation, be careful in your ministrations, to speak as the oracles of God. Search the scriptures, and may God open your understanding, that you may understand them. They point out your duty and your reward.

To declare the whole counsel of God, and to keep back nothing which may be profitable to your people, will require much attention, care and diligence. But you are to remember, that the whole of your duty does not respect the pulpit. You may be profited and highly profit your people in private conversation. And if you wish to have your preaching produce a good moral effect upon their life and conversation, be careful to recommend every thing commendable and praiseworthy by your own deportment. Be an example unto the flock in all the great duties of piety and philanthropy. Let it be your aim to regulate your own conduct by the doctrines and moral instructions, which you dispense to others. This is necessary to the peace and quiet of your own mind ; and without it how can you promise yourself success ? Though your preaching be ever so good, yet if your life betray the wicked man, *the wolf in sheep's clothing*, you will injure the cause, which you have professedly advocated, and contempt and infamy will be your lot. But we hope better things of you ; things which will evince your regard for the honour and interest of religion, your love to the Redeemer and to the souls of men.

Your mind is, doubtless, impressed with a solemnizing view of the transactions of this day, and of the great trust to be committed to you. But is not your heart, in some measure, cheered by the following language of divine consolation ? *Lo I am with you. My grace is sufficient for you.*

DEAR SIR,

Accept my best wishes for your present and future happiness. I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to conduct you with honour and success through your ministry. May you be a faithful watchman, a good soldier of Jesus Christ. May you not only speak as the oracles of God ; but dispense the ordinances of the gospel with fitness and propriety ; keep up the discipline of

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God's house ; visit your people usefully and profitably, and having wonned many souls to Christ, may you finally receive from your divine Master, that transporting eulogy, *Well done good and faithful servant enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

Brethren and friends of the Christian Society in this place.

The external indications of regard for religion, and of respect for the christian ministry, which you have exhibited, will do you honour and afford you many comfortable reflections, if they flow from a corresponding temper, and are the outward expressions of the inward feelings of the heart.

In the course of about eighty-six years and seven months, the people, in this place, have been favoured with the settled ministry about seventy-eight years and nine months. That you, for such a course of years, should be in a situation to enjoy the regular stated administration of the divine ordinances, is a consideration which should excite a tribute of praise to *Him who walketh in the midst of the golden candle-sticks, and holdeth the stars in his right hand.*

But amidst all the pleasing reflections, which such a review can inspire, we find the tender emotions of grief and sorrow excited. This people have found, that the treasure of the gospel is put in earthen vessels. In a little more than fourscore years five persons have been introduced into the ministerial office among them. One resigned his office and hath entered into a civil department. Four have not been suffered to continue by reason of death*. Few places have been visited with heavier trials in this respect, than you, my christian friends. Nine months have not yet elapsed since you were called into mourning, and left as sheep without a shepherd, by the mortality of that worthy good man the *Rev. Samuel Langdon, D. D.* May you long be profited by a pious recollection of the truths and useful instructions, which he dispensed to you.

The great repairer of breaches, who sends pastors among those, who desire and seek for the blessing, hath, as we trust,
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Rev. Theophilus Cotton was ordained Jan. 13, 1712, and deceased August 16, 1726.
 Rev. Joseph Whipple ————— Jan. 15, 1727, ————— Feb. 17, 1757.
 Rev. Josiah Bayley ————— Oct. 19, 1757, ————— Sept. 12, 1762.
 Rev. Paine Wingate ————— Dec. 14, 1763, and resigned March 18, 1776.
 Rev. S. Langdon, D. D. was installed Jan. 18, 1781, and deceased Nov. 29, 1797.

in great loving kindness, disposed you to unite in the choice of a successor, who is, this day, to take the oversight of you in the Lord. If his life and health should be continued, we flatter ourselves with the hope, that he will so discharge the duties of the ministry, as fully to justify the choice, you have been led to make.

Let his joy be the joy of you all. While it is his pleasure and aim to feed the sheep and the lambs of Christ's flock, and, in meekness, to instruct those, who oppose themselves, *If God peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth*, it becomes you to unite with him in every measure within your reach, which is calculated to advance the cause and interest of religion.

We wish well to the man of your choice, and if you wish to have him feel the happy effects of your continued regard, you will not make him an offender for a word. You will not put uncandid constructions upon his conduct. You will not desert his ministrations. You will not be inattentive to his moral instructions. You will not be gratified to see him embarrassed and perplexed for the want of proper and decent support. You will not be pleased to see his feelings wounded at any time, or upon any occasion. Far from this will be your temper and conduct.

Brethren, we wish you well, and may the God of peace bless you and your pastor elect, and make you and him perfect in every good work to do his will; so that you may be solaced with the blessings of love, peace and harmony here, and hereafter be admitted to participate in a fulness of joy, and unceasing pleasures at God's right hand.

Men, Brethren and Fathers of this Assembly.

THE Spirit of inspiration hath advertised us of perilous times, and cautioned us not to *believe every spirit, but to try the spirits, whether they be of God*. These things merit our serious attention at the present day, in which a spirit of error and delusion rears its frightful head in various forms. Are you willing to desert the good old way, and to imitate the example of those, who have grown tired of the guidance and instruction of Moses and the Prophets, of Christ and
this

his apostles ? Are you willing to adventure forth into scenes of novelty and dangerous experiment ; to become followers of wandering stars, or blazing short-lived meteors, which will soon leave you in all the horrors of darkness. O, be wise before it be too late, and let me assure you, that *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*

Life and death, the blessing and the curse are set before you. If Thomas Pain, the author of " The Age of Reason," be the true prophet, then follow him. Or if the Illuminati, who are darkening the world by their system, be the true prophets, then follow them. But if Christ, the Son of God, who is the brightness of the Father's Glory, and the express image of his person, and who justly assumes the title, *the light of the world* be the true Prophet, then follow him.

Such features of a divine origin do the holy scriptures carry in the glorious doctrines, which they teach ; in the wise and salutary conduct, which they prescribe ; in their predictions and corresponding events ; and in their rise and progress in the world, that I do only apply to those among whom the light of the gospel shines, the words of the Baptist, with which I close. **HE THAT BELIEVETH ON THE SON HATH EVERLASTING LIFE : AND HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT THE SON SHALL NOT SEE LIFE ; BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON HIM.**

A M E N.



T H E
C H A R G E,
B Y T H E

REV. DR. H A V E N.

RESTING satisfied in the ample testimonials of the ministerial qualifications of the person on whom we now impose our hands ; and being designated by this venerable council to ordain and let *him* apart to the work of the gospel ministry, by charging him before God and holy Angels. We do, accordingly, in the name of the council convened, and by authority derived from this glorious *head* of the Church, ordain *you*, Mr. JACCOB ABBOT, a *minister* of the gospel of Jesus Christ, a *Bishop*, a *presbyter*. We now commit to you the charge and oversight of this particular flock :—You are hereby invested with the same character and ministerial authority with ourselves ;—charging you, to take this sacred and very important office upon you, not of constraint, but willingly—not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.

Take heed to this ministry you are now receiving in the Lord, to fulfil it.

Preach the word—be instant in season, and out of season—reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine :—not handling the word of God deceitfully ; but by manifestation of the truth, commending yourself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Preach

Preach JESUS CHRIST and him crucified, and risen again for our justification; warning every man, and instructing every man in all wisdom; that you may present every man perfect before God in Christ.

Preach the plain gospel of Jesus; uncorrupted by vain philosophy, and the metaphysical sophistry of the present age:—Cast not a mist before the eyes of your hearers, by introducing metaphysical distinctions, instead of plain *scripture* reasoning:—nor ever plunge them into the awful abyss of *fatalism*, by pretending to be wise above what is written. Imitate your great master and his apostles, adducing plain facts, rather than the deceiving words and wisdom of this world.

Preach CHRIST, the wisdom of God and the power of God to every man, who believeth.—Let your preaching be plain, practical, and fervent. Thus be wise to win souls.

Administer the seals of the new testament—Baptism, and the Lord's supper to all proper subjects, like a wise and faithful steward over the house of God—distinguishing between the holy and profane.

As much as in you lies, in this enfeebled age of church-authority, dispense the primitive discipline, which Christ has appointed in all his churches; doing nothing by *partiality*, that the ministry be not blamed. And bless the congregation in the name of the Lord.—

The same things we now commit to you, commit *thou* to others, as providence shall call you—But lay hands suddenly on no man.

Beloved brother, take heed to thyself.—Be an example to the flock, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.—*Live* the gospel you preach; that you may be able to say to your dear flock, “Be ye followers of me as I am of Christ.”

Take heed to the flock—feed the sheep—feed the lambs. Stir up the gift that is in thee. Give thyself to reading, meditation, and prayer—Meditate on these things—give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all men.—Thus approve thyself a workman, who needeth not to be ashamed; rightly dividing the word of life; and give to every one his portion in due season.

In

In fine, dear sir, we charge you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and before holy angels, make full proof of thy ministry—keep thyself pure from the blood of precious souls. Oh ! that a deep sense of the worth of souls—the solemn account you will shortly have to give up to your great Lord, may have an abiding and powerful influence on all your ministry.

Do you ask with serious concern, who is sufficient for these things ? Hear then the language of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls directed to you, to every faithful minister, “ Lo ! I am with you always,” “ My grace is sufficient for you—my strength is made perfect in your weakness.”

Rest on his faithful promise, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Thus be faithful to God, to your own soul, and to the souls of your people—then, all hail the day of your last account ? The chief Shepherd shall appear, and place a crown of glory, a crown of life eternal on thy head.

A M E N.

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY
JOHN HUTCHINGS

IN TWO VOLUMES.
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T H E

RIGHT HAND *of* FELLOWSHIP,

B Y T H E

REV. JESSE APPLETON.

IF there be any thing remaining in the human heart, which is refined, noble, or dignified, it is sure to find support, and encouragement, in the religion of Jesus. Every passion, or desire, which can possibly be improved to a good purpose, meets with objects in this religion, on which it may operate to advantage.

Is there in the human breast, a thirst for being, a desire for unlimited existence? The Gospel speaks of *life and immortality*. Do men feel a desire for knowledge, and a freedom from those many doubts, and difficulties, which embarrass all their present speculations? The gospel informs us that after death, the good man shall enjoy the best possible advantages for extending his knowledge; that tho' he now sees *through a glass, darkly, he shall then see face to face*.—Are the social feelings implanted in the human heart? Is there an inclination in man to associate with his fellows; to communicate his thoughts and desires to others, and receive the like communications from them? The christian religion promises to believers, the enjoyment of the best society. *They shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*. They shall be familiarly conversant with a select company, chosen from *all nations, and kindreds, and tongues*. Do we feel, within us, a
desire

desire of fame, honour, and distinction? The gospel speaks of *honour, glory and immortality*, of our sitting on thrones, and being raised to an equality with angels. Is there, in man, a kind of attraction, among congenial souls? An inclination to form particular attachments; to enter into strong and lasting friendships? This inclination is countenanced, and encouraged, both by the general tendency of the christian religion, and by the particular example of its divine Author.

Proceeding from the love of God, we might naturally expect that christianity should bear the marks of its divine origin, and tend to promote *peace on earth, and good will toward men*. Accordingly, we find that no exhortations more frequently occur than those, which would persuade men to benevolence, and a tender and affectionate regard for each other.

But the example of Christ is still more to our purpose. He selected a certain number of companions, whom he honoured by the appellation of friends. They were to be partakers of his joy or sorrow, his honour or reproach. They *continued with him, in his temptations*; they *followed him, in the regeneration*, and both before and after his ascension, were instrumental of carrying on that new birth or renovated state of things, in the moral world, which he had originated.

Among these, there was one, who had a particular share in his master's affections. He was called *The disciple whom Jesus loved*. He leaned on Jesus' bosom, and enjoyed the most honourable familiarity with him. Our Lord had other particular attachments; he loved Lazarus, and wept at his tomb.

From these examples of Jesus Christ, it appears that he not only enjoined, in his religion, the most general and extensive benevolence, but did himself indulge the social feelings. He formed particular attachments, he entered into strong and lasting friendships.

As a minister of his religion, and strongly influenced by those social feelings, which Jesus Christ himself has seen fit to patronize, I cheerfully perform the office assigned me, by this ecclesiastical council.

Unto you, my *Dear Brother*, I now give this *Right Hand of Fellowship*. By this we acknowledge your abilities, your
literary

literary and moral acquirement, and your regular introduction into the christian ministry.

We believe, that under the influence of christian principles, you will *Take heed to yourself, and to the flock of God, over which, the Holy Ghost has made you an overseer : that you will count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ your Lord.*

We rejoice that you have now *taken part with us, in this ministry ; and we embrace you as our brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.*

We declare our readiness to communicate with you, in all the offices of Christian fellowship. Nothing, on our part, shall be wanting to your personal happiness, or ministerial success. We will rejoice in your joy ; we will weep at your sorrow, and *God forbid that we should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you.*

And while in the sincerity of our souls, we tender you, these our services, we have received your hand, as an undoubted pledge of your willingness to reciprocate them.

And now, *my Brother*, may the Lord bless you, and make you a faithful labourer in the vineyard of Christ. May he give you a long, a peaceful and a prosperous ministry, and having turned many to righteousness, may you, hereafter *shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as a star for ever, and ever.*

Fathers and Brethren of this Church and Society,

We congratulate you, on the prospect, which this day opens upon you. Since the death of your late venerable minister, you have experienced, yourselves, and manifested to others, *how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.*

All the friends of good order and religion, have witnessed with abundant satisfaction, the regularity, caution and unanimity that have uniformly characterized your proceedings. They have rejoiced at *beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith, in Christ.*

You, this day, behold the happy issue of all your endeavours for resettling the gospel ministry. You behold the man
in

in whom, your wishes and esteem have centered. *Behold now, he is, according to your wish, in God's stead. He, also is formed out of the clay. His terror shall not make you afraid, neither shall his hand lie heavy upon you.* Let him continue to share largely in your esteem and affection. Manifest your attachment to him, but especially to that Gospel, the principles of which, he will unfold, explain, and inculcate. Thus you will give peace to his days and success to his ministry. Thus you will qualify the best desires of his heart, which, we believe, are directed to your everlasting interest. *For what is his hope, or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?*

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